

JOHN

May 2018 be filled
with hope and
promise for us all.

◆ Arnold's March to Quebec

◆ The Miners Bucket

◆ Red Cross Motor Corp

◆ Fresh Flowers

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Welcome to JOHN

The new year is upon us and we all hope for a bright and Happy New Year. As I go through the days, I never seem to tire of items or events that I want to share. This issue continues the trend to tell stories of interest in small bursts that can be readily enjoyed without disruption to the daily busy schedule we all experience.

Captain Benedict Arnold's treason has become almost the only popularly known element of his career, overshadowing and blotting out the memory of his expedition against Quebec, his exploits on Lake Champlain, his relief of Fort Stanwix, and his services in the fighting which led to Saratoga. But for his betrayal of his charge at West Point, he would have stood out in American history as one of the great soldiers in the Revolution. His march to Quebec was indeed a positive highlight of his career.

The next story tells about some of my experiences growing up in a coal mining community. Both my Father and Grandfather spent most of their lives in the Colorado coal mines. The insert above is a photo of a safety lamp similar to the one my Grandfather used in his job in the mine as a fireboss. A safety lamp provided illumination in the mine and was designed to operate in the air that may contain methane and blackdamp both of which are potentially flammable or explosive when present in the mine in dangerous amounts. Detailed workings of these lamps can be found via a Wikipedia search on safety lamps. My story is of course on a more personal level.

The Motor Corps of the Red Cross was originally organized in 1918 during WWI, primarily to render supplementary aid to the Army & Navy, particularly by removing sick & wounded men from ships & trains to hospitals & homes.

In WWII the Motor Corps was almost entirely made up of nearly 45,000 women who clocked over 61 million miles answering nine million calls to transport the sick and wounded, deliver supplies and take volunteers and nurses to and from their posts. A special thanks to Christine Holley who provided the background for this story, which includes mention of her Aunt, Helene B. Trax who served in the Red Cross Motor Corp.

JAH

Arnold's March to Quebec

If one's antagonist can be forced to fight on two fronts at once, he is always at a disadvantage. While Schuyler's forces were still lingering at Ticonderoga, preparing for the advance toward Montreal, Washington in Cambridge had been pondering this strategic axiom. There was another front which might be developed: Quebec, 150 miles down the St. Lawrence from Montreal. If those two towns were attacked at the same time Carleton would be at a serious disadvantage and would be easy to overcome at one or the other, probably both. Quebec, then, should be the object of an expedition simultaneous with that against Montreal.

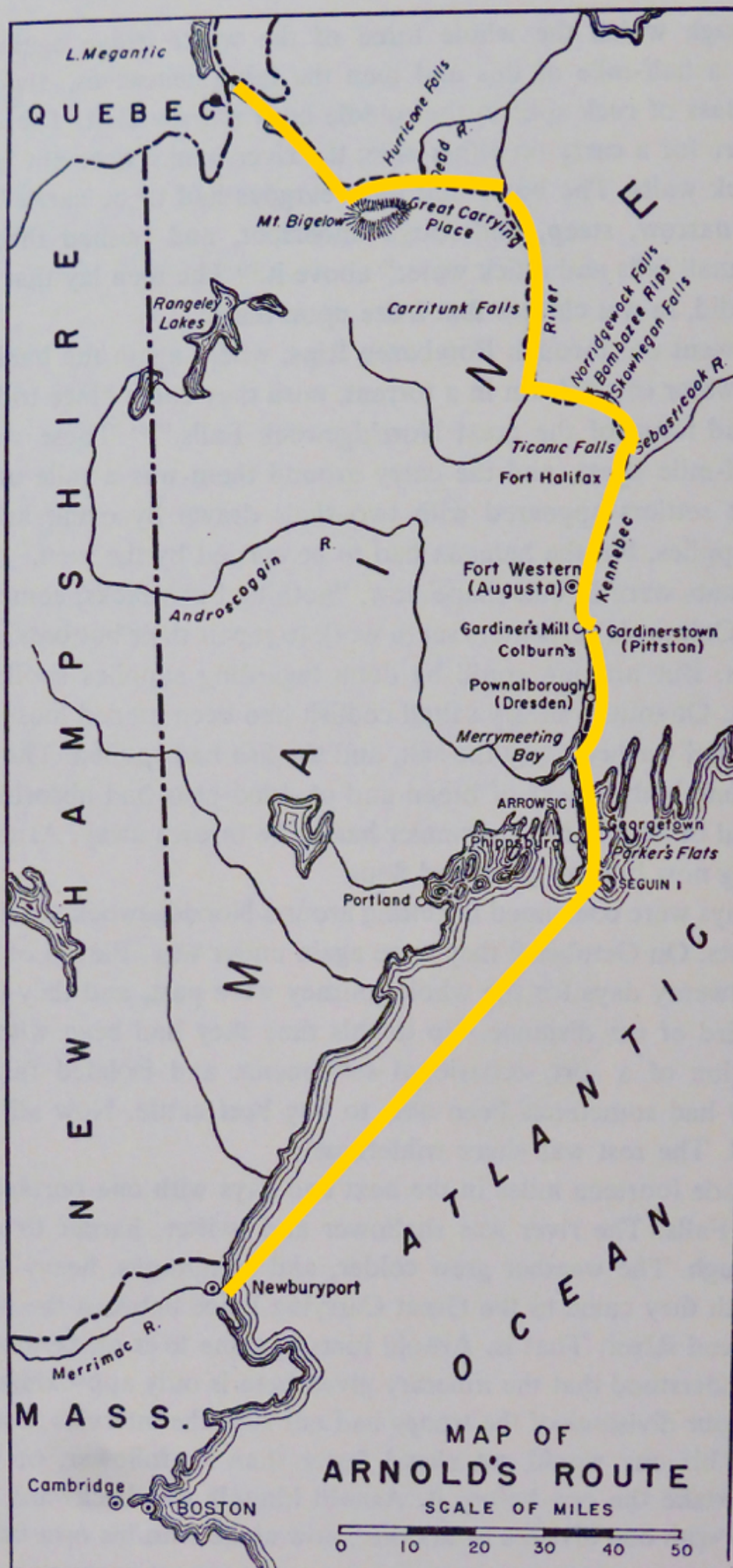
On August 20, 1775, Washington wrote to Schuyler: "The Design of this Express is to communicate to you a Plan of an Expedition which has engaged my Thoughts for several Days. It is to penetrate into Canada by Way of Kennebeck River, and so to Quebeck....I can very well spare a Detachment for this purpose of one Thousand or twelve Hundred men, and the Land Carriage of the Rout proposed is too inconsiderable to make an objection." That last sentence clearly shows how little he knew of the proposed "Rout." His thoughts about such an expedition soon crystallized into a decision to send it, and he looked about for someone to lead it. His choice of a commander could hardly have been bettered. When Washington offered Arnold the command, as colonel, of an expedition against Quebec, he offered it to someone who still cherished the desire to invade Canada. Arnold accepted with avidity.

On August 21, 1775 Arnold was writing to Reuben Colburn, a Kennebec boat builder asking, how soon could 200 light "Battoos" be procured or built at Kennebec, capable of carrying six or seven men with their provisions, "say 100 wt. to each man", each boat to be furnished with four oars, two paddles and two setting poles? What would they cost? Could a quantity of fresh beef be procured at Kennebec? Arnold also wanted information as to "the Difficulty attending an Expedition that way, in particular the Number, & length, of the Carrying Placed, wheather Low, Dry land, Hills or Swamp, Also the Depth of Water in the River at this Season, wheather and easy Stream of Rapid." This inquiry discloses Washington's ignorance, and Arnold's of the nature and condition of the river they proposed to use as a road to Canada.

On September 5, 1775, notice of the expedition appeared in General Orders. Service in the detachment was to voluntary, and it was desired that none but "active Woodsmen" "well acquainted with batteaus" should present themselves. The desire for woodsmen acquainted with bateaux was, unfortunately, not met. The men other than selected riflemen were mostly farmers, few of them having had any experience in the wild woods or in the management of bateaux. In all the detachment total some 1,051.

Washington's orders to Arnold were full and comprehensive, impressing upon him the necessity of discovering "the real Sentiments of the Canadians towards our Cause." If they were "averse to it and will not co-operate or at least willingly acquiesce...you are by no Means to prosecute the Attempt." Arnold was to restrain his men from the "Imprudence and Folly" of showing "Contempt of the Religion" of the Canadians "by ridiculing any of its Ceremonies or affronting its Ministers or Votaries...and to punish every Instance of it." There was to be no plundering of either friend or foe; all provisions and supplies were to be purchased and paid for. Although the expedition was to be pushed with vigor, yet, "if unforeseen Difficulties should arise or if the Weather shou'd become so severe as to render it hazardous to proceed in your own Judgement and that of your principal Officers (whom you are to consult) In that case you are to return." The the last injunction, it would seem Arnold paid little attention.

Note: The origins of the story on these three pages came from **The War of the Revolution**, written by Christopher Ward, edited by John Richard Alden. This work in two volumes tells of the battles of the war and it is purely military in its intention.



On a pound of meat a day and a little oatmeal the detachment finally were at journeys end. They pushed on with renewed spirits, although in sad physical condition. They had yet sixty or seventy miles to march to the St. Lawrence. But the wilderness was behind them. They were approaching civilization, or at least Indian settlements, Sartigan the first. Arnold was there and had laid in a stock of provisions. "The men were furious, voracious and insatiable." In spite of the advice of the officers "to insure moderation, the men were outrageous upon the subject...Boiled beef..potatoes, boiled and roasted, were gormandized without stint." Many of them fell ill; three of them died "by their imprudence."

The straggling force was brought together at the village of St. Mary, about halfway between Sartigan and the St. Lawrence. At this point they left the Chaudiere and marched through snow, mud and water knee-deep due north across the plains of Canada toward the river.

On the 9th of November the habitants on the bank of the St. Lawrence saw, emerging from the woods, a band of scarecrows, their clothing "torn in pieces...hung in strings--few had any shoes but moggasons made of raw skins--many without hats, beards long and visages thin and meager. So at last came to to Point Levi 600, much resembling the animals which inhabit New Spain called the Ourang-Outang. " --600 hundered of the 1100 men who had started. Their journey had taken forty-five days, instead of the twenty, as Arnold had predicted. They had traveled 350 miles, instead of 180, from Fort Western.

Arnold's journey to Quebec is one of the most famous military marches recorded in history. If it had resulted in the capture of that stronghold it would have been celebrated as a great triumph. That it failed, by so little as it did, should not obscure it fame as a magnificent exploit. For sustained courage, undaunted resolution, and uncomplaining endurance of almost incredible hardships, those men who grimly persisted to the end deserved high honor and unstinted praise.

As for the man who led them, Arnold had an adventurous and, as was inevitable with his disposition, a stormy career, but proved to be a solider of outstanding merit. He did not merely order his troops forward, he led them; he was a fighting man, and he had, as he deserved to have, the devotion of his troops. An old soldier of his command at Saratoga said of him: "He was our fighting general, and a bloody fellow he was. He didn't care for nothing, he'd ride right on. It was 'Come on boys!' 'twarn't 'Go boys!' He was as brave a man as ever lived."

My Grandfather, Hiram Henry Holley was born in Iowa in 1874. The first son of Derenzie and Anna Holley who lived in Bear Creek, Iowa. Derenzie died in 1880 leaving his wife, Anna with three very young boys. Hiram was just six years old at the time. Anna moved to South Dakota to be next to her brothers who lived there.

My Grandfather left his family at the age of 16, with his horse and the clothes on his back and headed to parts unknown to this day. My Grandmother, Harriet would later share some stories of Hiram's adventures that she said totaled some nine years, which ended when he settled in Colorado. His Mother, Anna had remarried and was living with her new husband, William Hillier in Oak Creek, Colorado. William was a coal miner who came to the US from England and he took the three step sons under his wing and he was the one who got Hiram into the mines. William Hillier was killed in a coal mining accident in 1912. Hiram had married and was working the mines around Oak Creek until around 1930 when he moved his family to the State Mine near Erie, CO.

This is where my story begins, Hiram and his son, John (my dad) worked at the State Mine and lived next to each other in the mining camp. My memory of my Grandfather is very limited since he died suddenly in 1944 and I was only five at the time. The one memory I still recall is going over to Hiram's house early in the morning before he went into the mine and sat at the kitchen table and we shared fresh baked bread that my Grandmother made. Hiram would drink his coffee from the saucer and I was always pleased to pile the peanut butter on my share of the bread. Since my dad, John was a great story teller, I had the opportunity to get to know my Grandfather much better by listening to my dad telling many stories about Hiram as I grew older. One story Dad retold many times was when the Moffat Company mine, Oak Hills exploded in Oak Creek in 1921. My Grandfather worked at this mine and he had a small farm in Oak Creek not too far from the mine itself. He was not in the mine at the time of the explosion which was caused by a dust blowout and "fire damp". The mine was a slope mine, tunneled into the side of the mountain and the blowout of the massive ball of fire destroyed

coal cars, rails and even the tipples. 5 miners died as a result of this explosion. My grandfather was one of the first on the scene and my Dad would proudly proclaim that my grandfather made it possible for rescue workers to enter the mine quickly by recommending that the air in the tunnel be reversed to clear the mine of any remaining gases that could cause another explosion. Of course, my dad had much more detail about this mine disaster, but you will have to stay with my shorter version for the time being. The other story to share concerns my Grandfather and his duties as a Fire Boss at the State Mine, it was his job to enter the mine each day before the miner's shift

started and to test the mine for any dangerous gases that would make it unsafe for the miners. In order to insure that the mine was safe, my grandfather had to climb into the mine from the air shaft, down a ladder into the main mine shaft about 300 feet below the surface. This was a daily task and as you can see by the end of the day meant some needed rest and a good meal before the next day's effort. I have not been able to confirm that the miners bucket he carried was the same one that my dad used for so many years, which I now have it in my possession along with so many memories of that "bucket." I take great pride in sharing the "bucket" stories that I experienced growing up as a coal miners' son.



The Miner's Bucket
My prized possession
that was so much a part
of my Dad's work and
created so many fond
memories for me.



For the miners, this bucket (pail) was the most practical way to take water and lunch into the mine. The bucket consisted of three sections with a lid. The bottom section was for the water, it held about a 1/2 gallon. I remember that there was always ice in the water taken by chipping ice from the ice box. (yes, we had a good old fashion ice box for many years). When we got a

refrigerator, it was ice cubes of course. The middle section was for the sandwiches or even better a left over piece of chicken or other meat. Always a piece of fruit included. The top section was for gum, chocolate or other items that my Mom felt that Dad needed! No there was no cup, you just lifted out the top two sections and drink from the bottom section. As noted above the bucket was simple but sturdy, which it had to be in the rough confines of a coal mine.



Coal mining was and still is a pretty rough way to make a living, but you will be hard tested to find workers that are not proud of their work in the mines.

My Dad, in the center is pictured above with two of his mining buddies.

Here is another photo of the miner's bucket. This photo also shows a 45 rpm record of Big Bad John by Jimmy Dean. This of course was my Dad's favorite. The bucket was so much of a part of our lives. When the mines started up after the summer layoff, it was an exciting time when the bucket came out. It was also used during summer fishing trips that my Dad and I went on. I always got a big kick out of drinking the ice water right out of the bucket, just like the miners did in the mine!



Red Cross Motor Corp



The Motor Corps of the Red Cross was originally organized in 1918 during WWI, primarily to render supplementary aid to the Army & Navy, particularly by removing sick & wounded men from ships & trains to hospitals & homes.

In WWII, nationally, the Motor Corps was almost entirely made up of women who clocked over 61 million miles answering nine million calls to transport the sick and wounded, deliver supplies, and take volunteers and nurses to and from their posts. In all, nearly 45,000 women served in the Motor Corps during World War II. Many completed the training in auto mechanics in order to be able to make automotive repairs on their own.

My aunt, Helene Trax, was working in Rochester, NY during the 1940s. When America went to war, she signed up with the Red Cross Motor Corps as a volunteer driver.

Back then, Rochester was known as the "imaging capital of America" because it was home to industries and universities that specialized in optical science-technologies that had become an integral part to the war effort. Parts of the Norden bomb sight used in many Allied planes, along with the radio delay fuse and other components used by the military, were all manufactured in Rochester, NY.

In addition to her job at Eastman Kodak Co., my aunt was called on to transport military or civilian personnel from the airport or railroad station to these companies as well as to area hospitals.

Volunteer drivers were required to attend classes in automotive mechanics. I remember Aunt Helene saying that although she KNEW how to change a tire, she was delighted that she never had to do so. But she almost flunked the carburetor course! She also recalled that sometimes you were told who you were driving, but sometimes not. If not, you didn't ask, you just drove. She spoke of blackouts and possible sabotage threats as some of the Rochester facilities were vital to the War effort.



Helene B. Trax

Red Cross Motor Corp

*Rochester, NY
1942*



In addition to the Motor Corp, Helene B. Trax and Christine's Mother, Betsy Trax were actively engaged in the **Bundles For Britain** movement. Christine still has the knitting instructions for mittens Helene and Betsy used in knitting many pairs of mittens for the **Bundles for Britain** program.

Bundles for Britain was started in 1940 by Mrs. Latham as a knitting circle in a store front in New York City. Knitted goods—socks, gloves, hats, sweaters, and scarves—were made and shipped to Britain. Within Sixteen months, Latham expanded Bundles into an organization with 975 branches and almost a million contributors, and by the spring of 1941, it had delivered 40,000 sleeveless sweaters, 10,000 sweaters with sleeves, 30,000 scarves, 18,000 pairs of sea boot stockings, 50,000 pairs of socks, and 8,000 caps. By 1941, moreover, Bundles had also shipped ambulances, surgical instruments, medicines, cots, blankets, field-kitchen units, and operating tables, along with used clothing of all sorts. The total value of goods shipped reached \$1,500,000; another \$1,000,000 was raised in cash.



FRESH FLOWERS



I've learned that no matter what happens, or how bad it seems today, life goes on, and it will be better tomorrow. I've learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way he/she handles these three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights. I've learned that regardless of your relationship with your parents, you'll miss them when they're gone from your life. I've learned that making a "living" is not the same as making a "life." I've learned that life sometimes gives you a second chance. I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands. You need to be able to throw something back. I've learned that even when I have pains, I don't have to be one. I've learned that every day you should reach out and touch someone. People love a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back. I've learned that I still have a lot to learn. I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

By Maya Angelou, from an interview on the Oprah show